Message Text

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R 141109Z JUN 77 FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4068 INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL AMCONSUL BOMBAY AMCONSUL CALCUTTA AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: NA TAGS: EAIR, IN

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: NAVIGATION CHARGES

REF: NEW DELHI 6566, STATE 099876

1. ECON COUNSELOR AND EMBOFF MET WITH DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION SARKAR ON JUNE 14 TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF INDIAN NAVIGATION CHARGES. HE SAID THAT SUCH CHARGES SHOULD REFLECT TRUE COSTS, INCLUDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, NEW SPECIALIZED AIRCRAFT, AND INCREASING SALARIES OF TRAINED PERSONNEL (E.G. AIR CONTROLLERS). HE RECOGNIZED, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT AIRLINES SHOULD NOT BE BURDENED WITH EXCESSIVE USER CHARGES IF THEY WERE TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY. AS A RESULT, HE HOPED TO BE REASONABLE AND STEER A MIDDLE COURSE.

2. REGARDING AIRPORT USER CHARGES, SARKAR SAID THAT BOTH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE INDIAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY WERE PRESSING FOR SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER INCREASES. HE THOUGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT WAS IMPORTANT TO PUT INTO EFFECT HIGHER AIRPORT CHARGES, BUT THAT ANY INCREASE DECIDED LATER THIS YEAR SHOULD BE MODERATE (IN HIS VIW), CERTAINLY LESS THAN 100 PERCENT. THEREAFTER, CHARGES SHOULD RISE ANNUALLY TO REFLECT INFLATION AND OTHER COSTS. AS FOR ENROUTE CHARGES, SARKAR THOUGHT THESE WERE LESS URGENT BUT THAT EVENTUALLY ANNUAL INCREASES OF 10-15 PERCENT WOULD BE REASONABLE TO TAKE

ACCOUNT OF INFLATION. HE MENTIONED THE EXAMPLE OF AUSTRALIA INCREASING SUCH CHARGES BY 15 PERCENT PER YEAR.

3. SARKAR SAID THAT THE GOI WAS PREPARING FOR A JULY 10 MEETING IN DELHI. GOI HAD ALREADY GIVE IATA ITS PROPOSALS AS WELL AS COST FIGURES JUSTIFYING THE NEED FOR INCREASES IN NAVIGATION CHARGES AND WAS AWAITING PAPERS FROM THE OTHER SIDE. HE STATED THERE WOULD BE AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, BUT NO DECISIONS, AT NEXT MONTH'S MEETING. HE HOPED THAT AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH IATA SOME DECISIONS ON INCREASED NAVIGATION CHARGES COULD BE REACHED BY THIS SEPTEMBER SO THAT THE GOI COULD PUT THEM INTO EFFECT IN FEBRUARY 1978.

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